

# Effects of Alternative Forms of Addressing Households on Response Rates, Data Quality, and Costs in a Mail Survey with an Address-Based Sample

Griselle Sánchez-Diettert, Nadia Assad,  
Jennifer Dykema, Kelly Elver  
University of Wisconsin Survey Center  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

International Field Directors and Technology Conference  
Austin, TX May 15-18, 2016

© 2016. Materials may not be reproduced without permission of the author.



# Presentation overview

---

- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Limitations and Strengths
- Lessons learned



# Presentation overview

---

- **Background**
- Methods
- Results
- Limitations and Strengths
- Lessons learned



# Researchers increasingly likely to collect data by mail

---

- Declines in response rates for telephone surveys
- Declines in coverage for Random Digit Dial (RDD) telephone surveys
- Availability of Computerized Delivery Sequence File (CDSF) & address-based sampling (ABS) methods



# The CDSF and ABS facilitate mail survey methodology

---

- Computerized Delivery Sequence Files (CDSF)
  - United States Postal Service database
- Sampling vendors access CDSF
  - Combine with other resources
  - Nearly complete coverage of all US households
- Researchers can request matching a name to the household by sample vendors





## Reasons not to use names

---

- How good are the names?
  - Not all addresses can be matched to a name
    - About 85% matches (Fahimi and Kulp, 2009)
  - Not all matches are accurate
- AAPOR Task Force Report on Address-based Sampling
  - Recommends not matching names to addresses
- Past research – no effect on response rates
  - Link et al. (2008) – Cases with a surname match
    - “Current STATE Resident” or “The SURNAME Household”



## Reasons to use names: Personalization

---

- *“any technique intended to cause the individual respondents to feel that they are receiving individual, personal consideration, and attention from the survey’s sponsor”*

(Worthen and Valcarce 1985, p. 735, cited in Dillman et al. 2007)

- Often associated with higher response rates
- Effects on response rate in ABS mail surveys are relatively unknown



# Current research questions

---

- Does personalization improve response rates for a state-based survey using an ABS frame?
- Does personalization improve data quality for a survey using an ABS frame?
- Is it cost efficient to use personalization for a survey using an ABS frame?





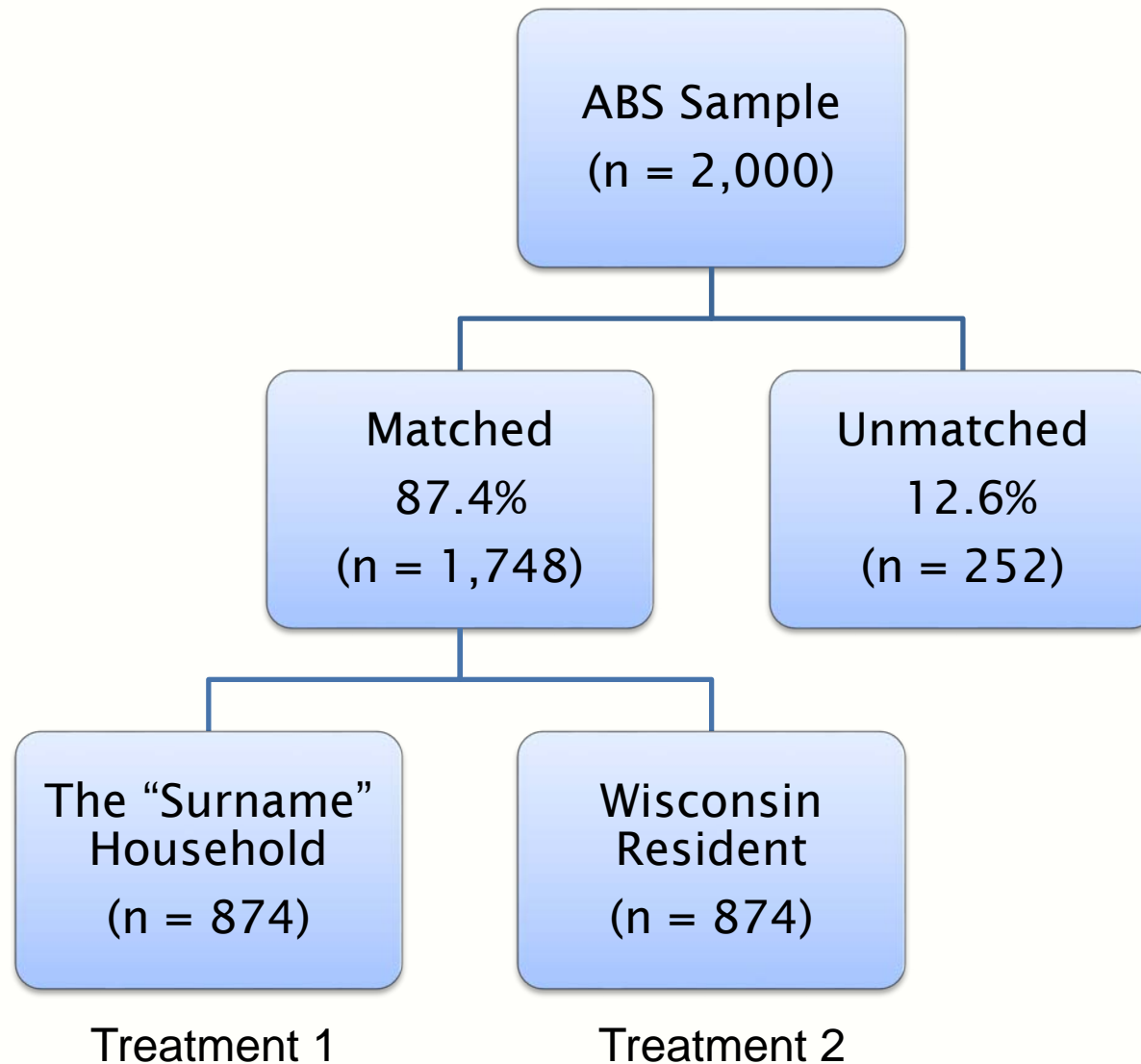
# Presentation overview

---

- Background
- **Methods**
- Results
- Limitations and Strengths
- Lessons learned

# Methods: Sampling Strategy & Experimental Design




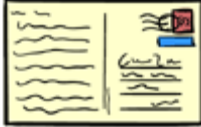




---





# Methods: Survey Administration

---

Contacts	Week 1	Week 2	Week 5	Week 9
<b>Initial Invitation</b>	  			
<b>First Reminder</b>				
<b>Second Reminder</b>			 	
<b>Final Reminder</b>				 

Methods: “Undeliverable as addressed” after initial invitation

Initial invitation - Full mailing with incentive  
Mailed to “The SURNAME Household”

Returned as “Undeliverable as addressed”

Second reminder – Full mailing with incentive  
Mailed to “Wisconsin Resident”



# Presentation overview

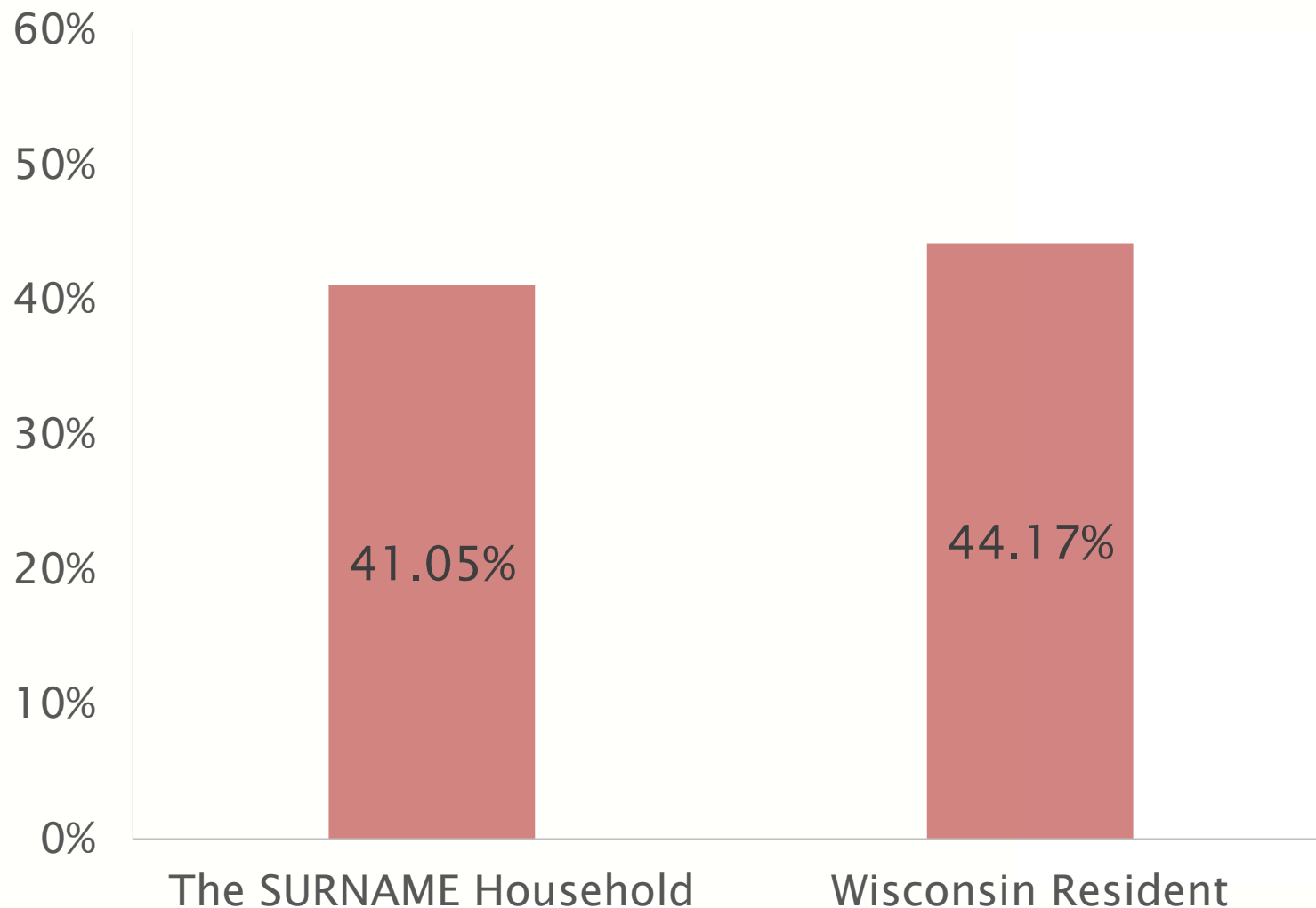
---

- Background
- Methods
- **Results**
- Limitations and Strengths
- Lessons learned



# Results: Response rates after the initial invitation by treatment groups

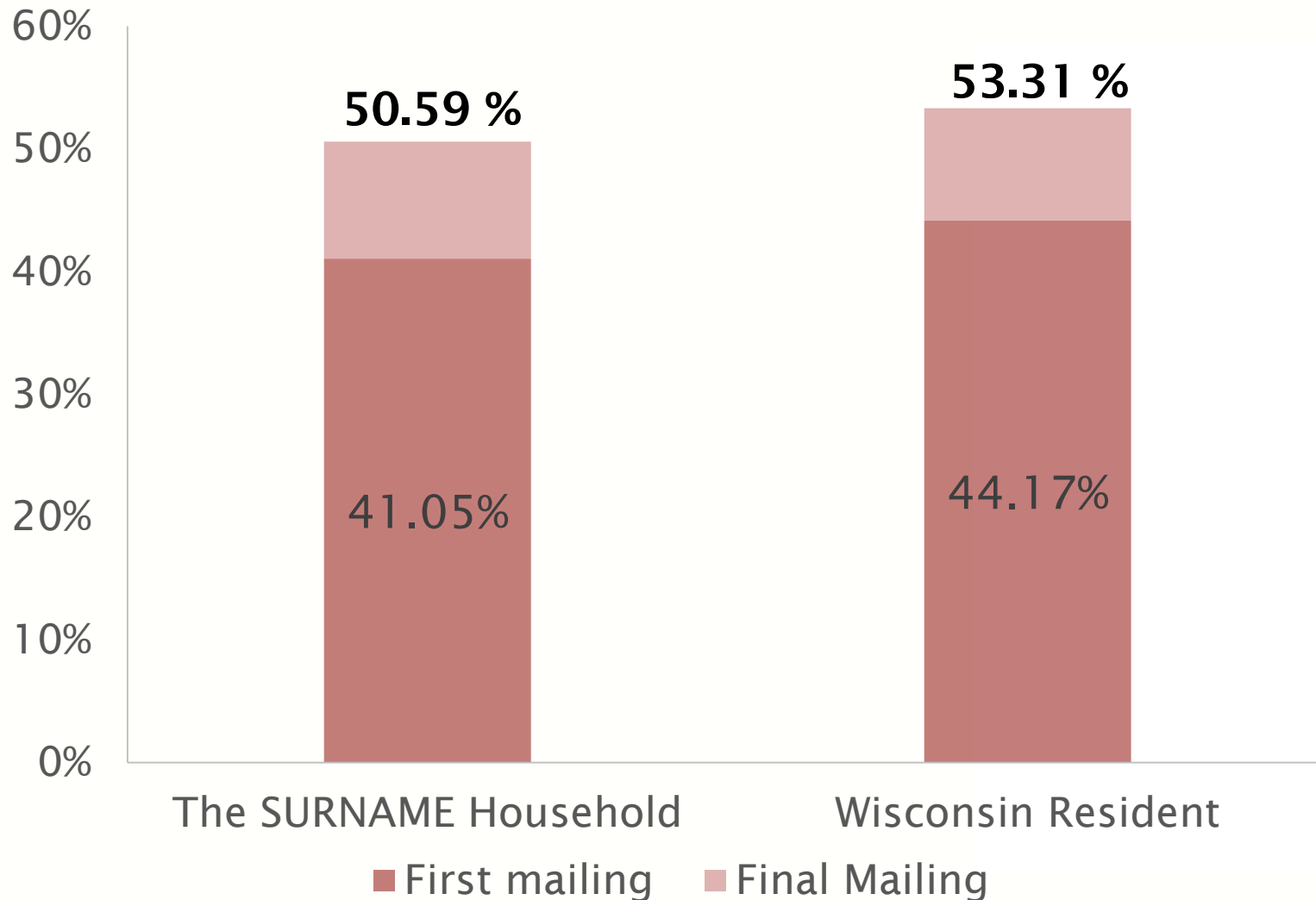
---





# Results: Response rates after the final mailing by treatment groups

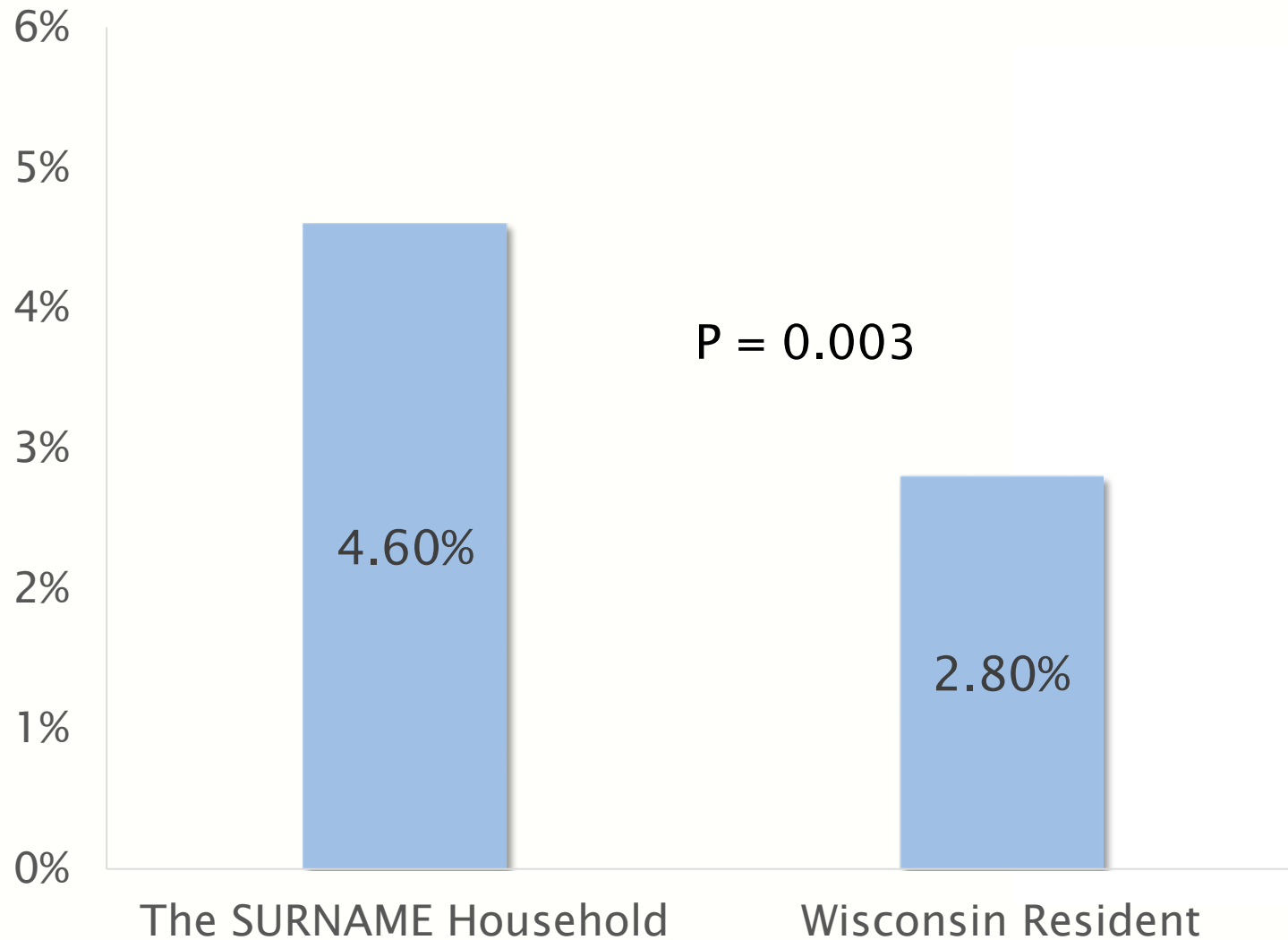
---





# Results: Mean level of missing data by treatment groups

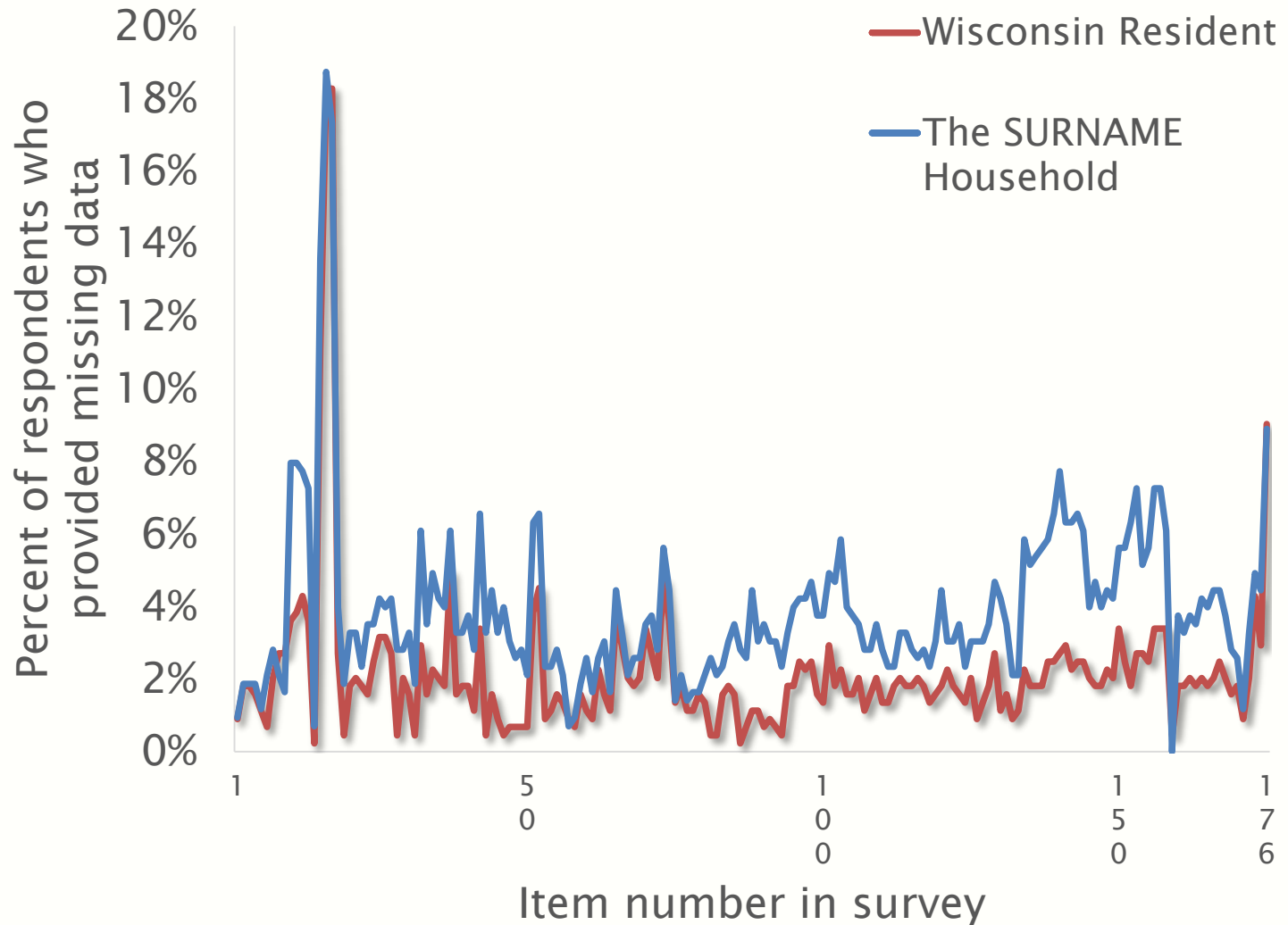
---



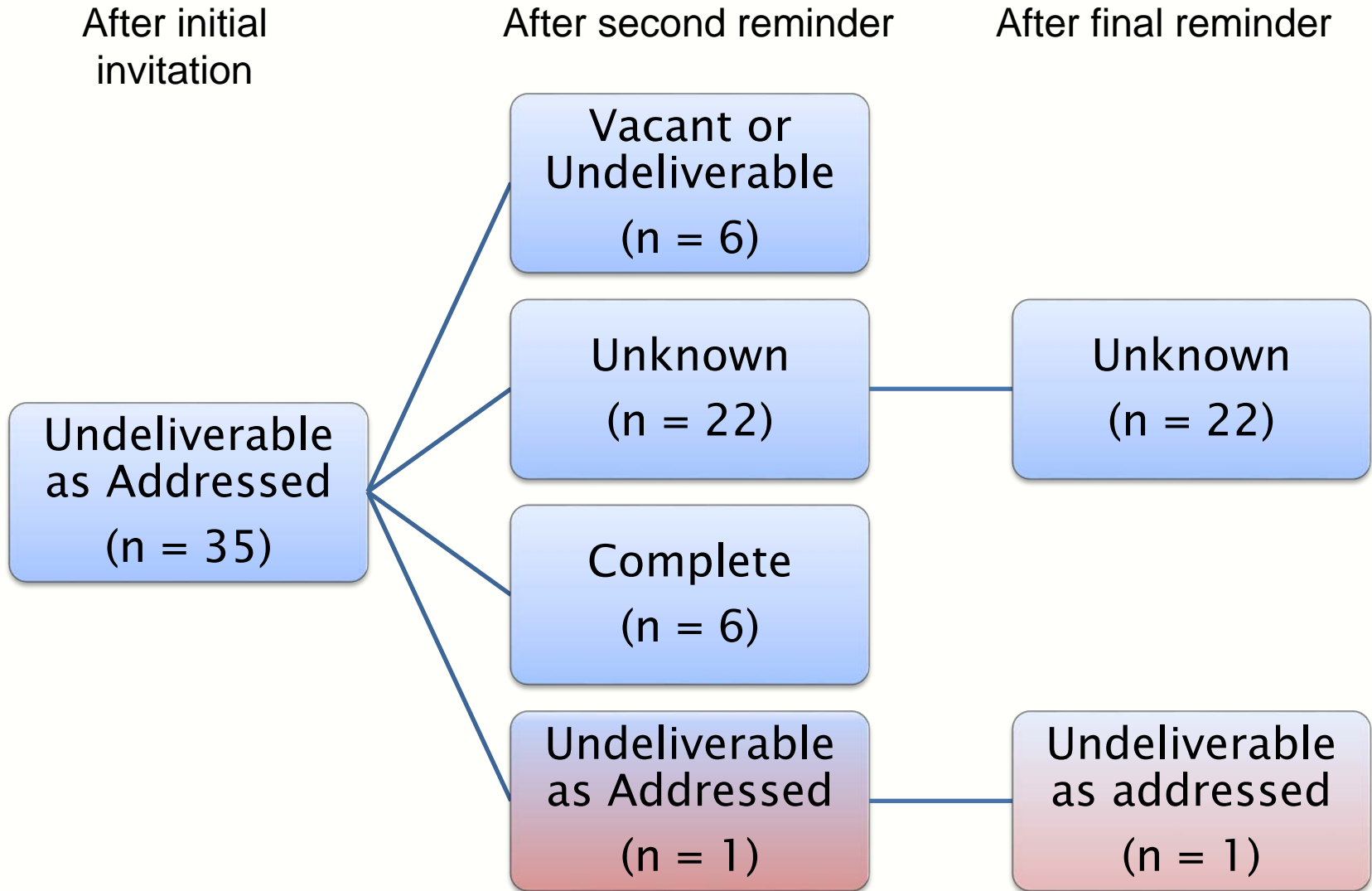




# Results: Missing data by question and treatment groups



# Results: Mapping the path of “Undeliverable as Addressed” for the “SURNAME Household” group





# Presentation overview

---

- Background
- Methods
- Results
- **Limitations and Strengths**
- Lessons learned



# Limitations and Strengths

---

- Study was conducted in the state of Wisconsin
- Only tested one kind of generic salutation
- High response rate – 50%
- Rigorous methodology for survey design and administration



# Presentation overview

---

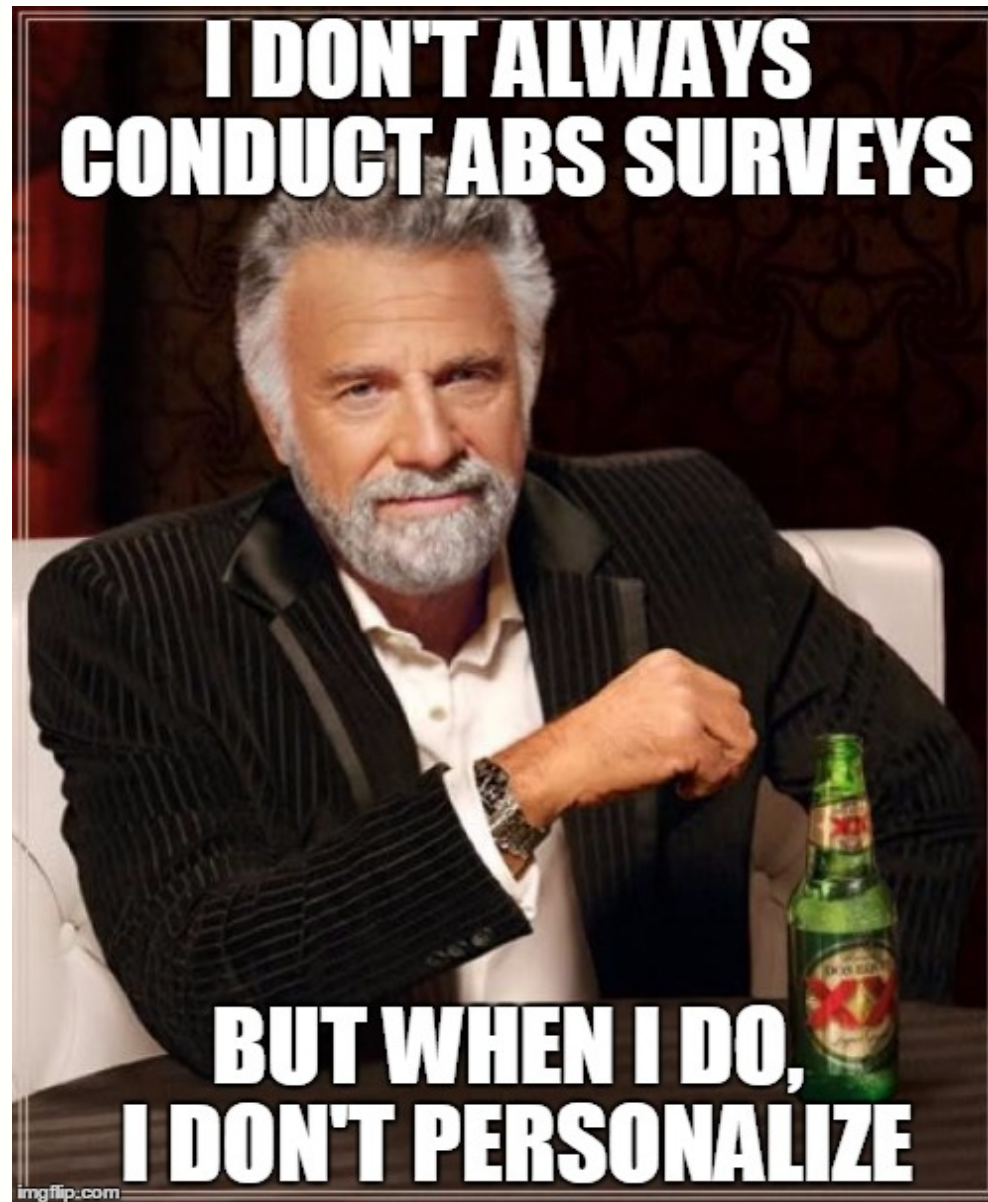
- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Limitations and Strengths
- **Lessons learned**



# Lessons Learned

---

- No effect on Response Rates
- Associated with higher levels of missing data
- Increase in cost
  - More project management time
  - Additional work in the mail room
  - Increase in field period



Thank You!

For copies of this presentation or more information, contact:

Griselle Sanchez-Diettert  
[gsanchez@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:gsanchez@ssc.wisc.edu)

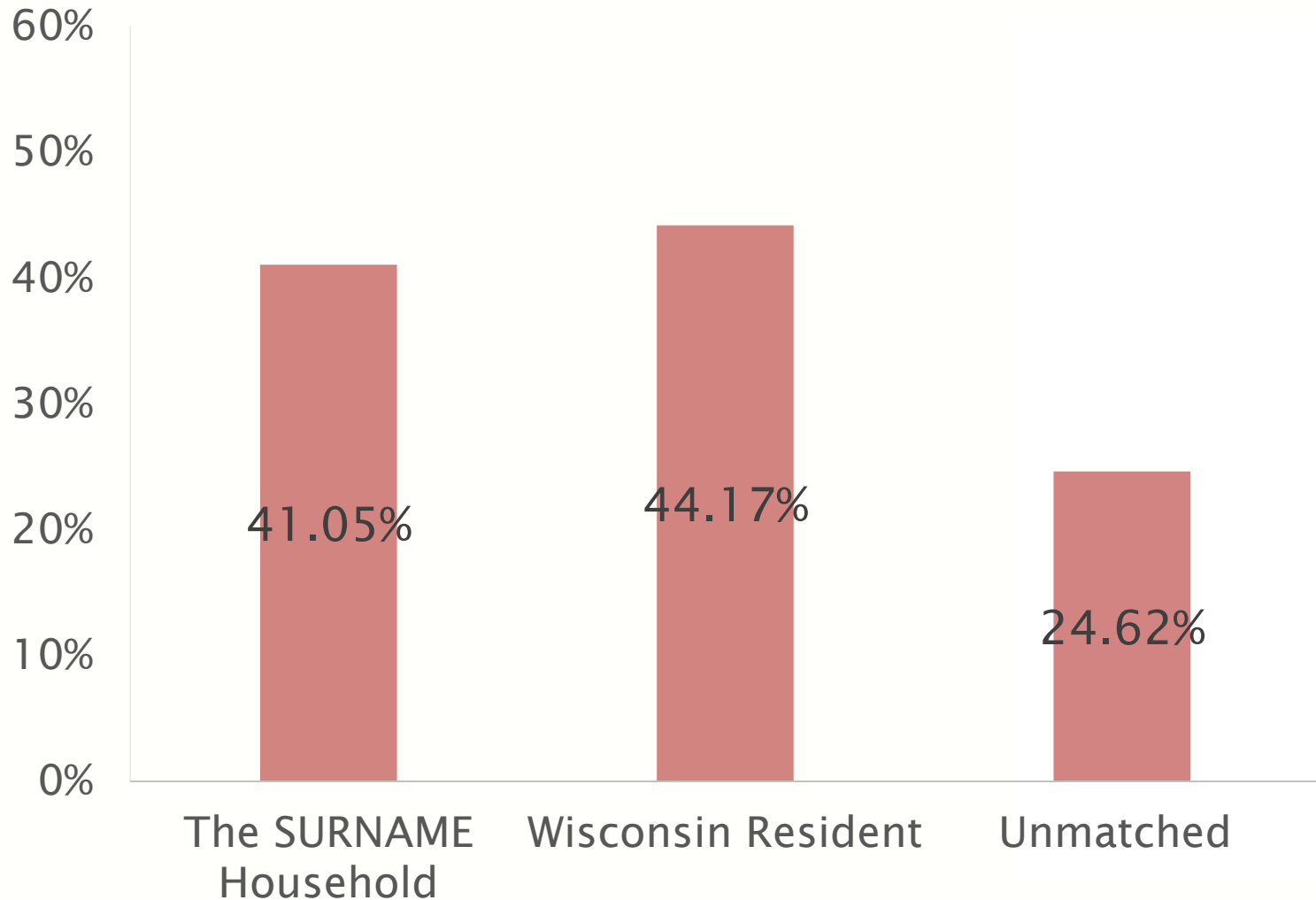
Nadia Assad  
[nassad@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:nassad@ssc.wisc.edu)

Please visit us at:  
[www.uwsc.wisc.edu](http://www.uwsc.wisc.edu)



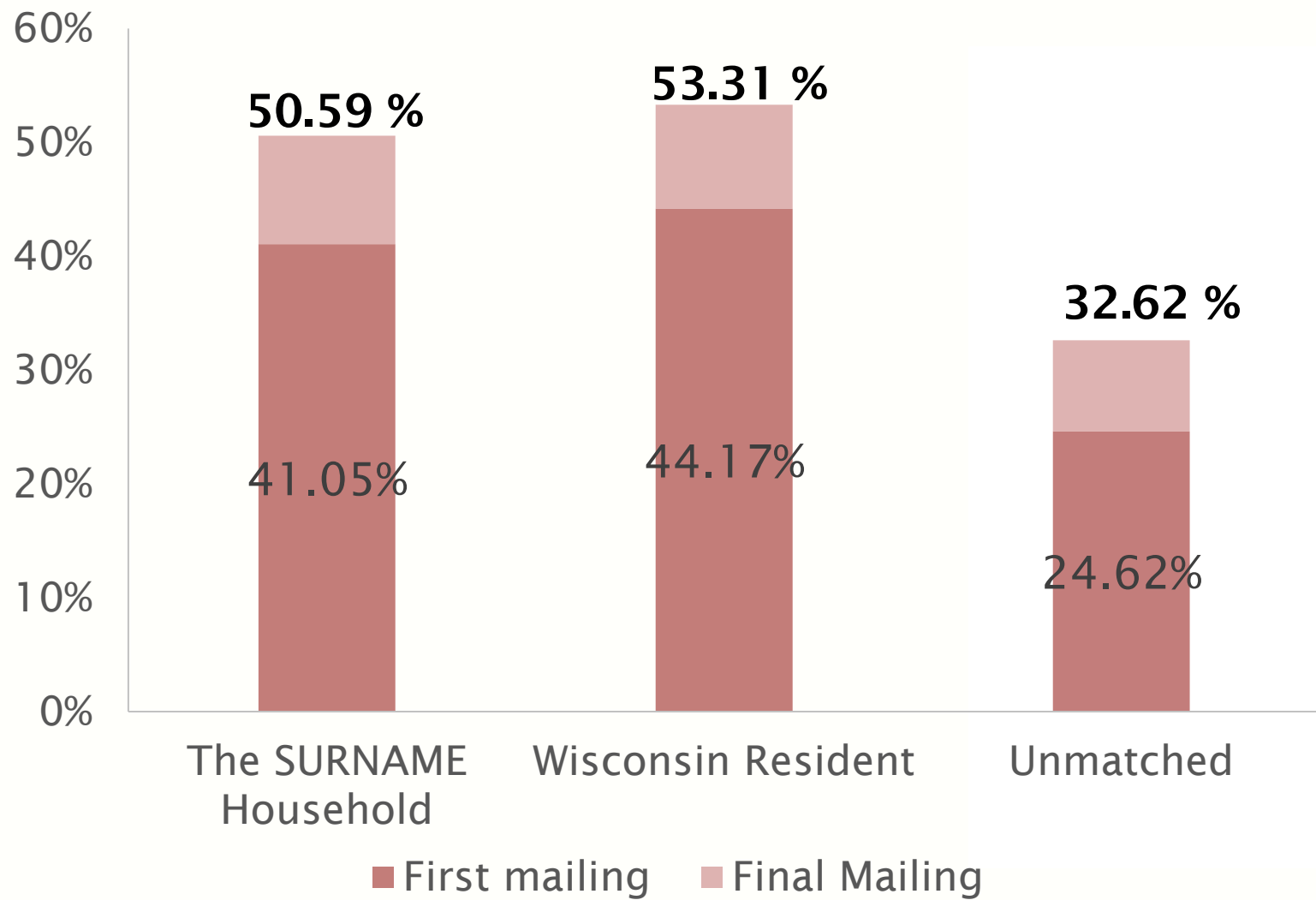
# Results: Response rates after the initial invitation by treatment groups and unmatched group

---





# Results: Response rates after the final mailing by treatment groups and unmatched groups



# Results: Mean level of missing data by treatment groups and unmatched group

